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ABSTRACT

This report contains eight articles on the importance of the role of women in family planning. An Assistant Secretary General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations, calls for increased female participation in national development. The Secretary General of The International Planned Parenthood Federation observes that women will want fewer children if their place in society is improved. A Justice of the Court of Appeals in Ghana points out that the advancement of women is a national concern and notes priorities to set for this goal. The Acting Chief of the Programme Division, United Nations Fund for Population Activities, declares that women must be involved in decision making and notes projects financed by UNFPA in this direction. An author on economic development feels that barriers against equal opportunities for women must be eliminated, and that employment and education are the keys to smaller families. A member of the Population Division, United Nations, discusses the fact that formal education of women is crucial to fertility declines, and the role of education is thus essential to national progress in many underdeveloped nations. (KSM)

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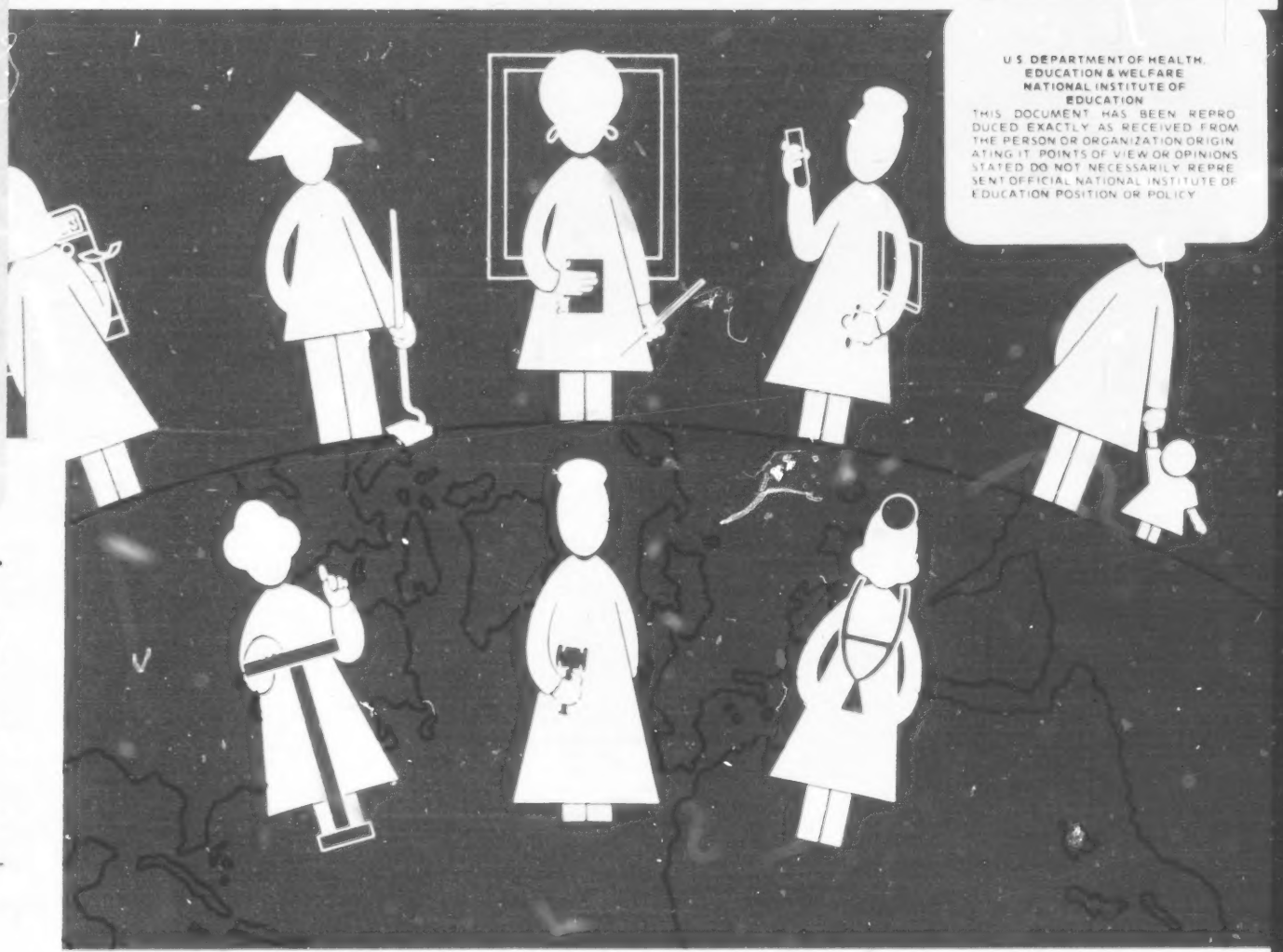

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Family Planning: Improving Opportunities for Women

REPORT NO. 18
SPRING
1974

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Alexander F. Victor

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The Victor-Bostrom Fund Report

1835 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006
Area Code 202 659-1833

Editor: Phyllis T. Piotrow

Assistant Editor: Timothy X. Sullivan

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FAMILY PLANNING: AN URGENT WORLDWIDE NEED

A Message from
The Empress Farah,
Shahbanou of Iran

(The article below was received too late for inclusion in the Victor-Bostrom Fund Report Family Planning: Improving Opportunities for Women. *Because of the importance of Her Majesty's message, however, we have prepared this special supplement to accompany the report—Editor)*

The progress of knowledge and technology during recent decades has greatly raised the aspirations of people throughout the world. Indeed, the expectations of people for a better standard of living are higher now than ever before, but the rapid increase in world population during the same decades poses a threat to such aspirations. Since population has a direct effect on economic and social development and the human environment, policies in the fields of education, health, housing, social security, employment and agriculture should be based on population considerations and, therefore, require integrated national planning and coordinating action at the highest levels of government.

The formulation of population policies and programs as an integral part of social and economic development efforts for the benefit of countries and the welfare of their people is now urgently needed and highly recommended. The United Nations has appropriately taken the lead both in assisting many governments in promoting the advancement of knowledge in the field of population and in considering the means which might be applied on a global level for the solution of population problems.

In Iran we have taken population problems very seriously. In 1967 the country embarked upon an urgent and large-scale effort to establish a strong population and family planning policy which would bring awareness and related services to every part of the country. Iran's white revolution establishes the social and humanitarian basis of our development effort—one of the major aims of which is the improvement of social welfare and the family planning program. We have implemented this program and to some extent we have been successful. We hope that with greater expansion of the program and improved methods of implementation we will achieve even greater success.

Through the family planning program we have pioneered a number of new approaches to the population problem, for example, the involvement in family planning of our unique revolutionary corps of young men and women which have attracted the interest of many other countries. Within recent years in Iran and in many other countries women have gained unprecedented liberty to act independently in the intellectual, social and economic spheres of life in addition to the sacred duty of motherhood. Women now have the right and the obligation to assume a productive role in the progress of the nation and the world. The family planning program provides them with the means to do this.

It has been proven that educated women have fewer children because they understand the responsibility to ensure the education, health and social well-being of their children. Having fewer children enables the mothers to dedicate greater time to the upbringing of their children and to contribute more actively to the society at large. Governments have responsibility, therefore, to take social and economic measures in order to encourage married couples to have smaller families. The urgency of problems caused by excessive rates of population growth calls for intensive and dedicated work in various government sectors.

The World Population Conference of 1974 sponsored by the United Nations should consider special measures to intensify national and international efforts to secure the maximum acceptance of family planning programs and should call on governments in both the developed and the developing nations to encourage and support the small family ideal. Let us hope that this Conference, the high point of World Population Year, will arouse even greater interest and generate concern over the population issue which is of such vital importance to all mankind.

FAMILY PLANNING IN IRAN

His Imperial Majesty, the Shah of Iran opened the Institute for the Protection of Mothers and Newborn in March, 1972.

The Institute has a family planning unit. Here, a nurse instructs a young mother in modern contraceptive methods.

The Empress Farah has always maintained great interest in the Institute's work. Above, she questions the Institute's director about its work.

Midwives are used throughout Iran. Above, the Empress meets young student midwives in one of the Institute's classrooms.

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18-20 Lower Regent Street, London SW1, England
Telephone: 930-3911/6

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810 Seventh Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022

(Tel: 212-541-7800)

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Female Participation Is Needed
For National Development

MAR

Equal Rights for the World's Women

by

HELVI L. SIPILA
Assistant Secretary General
Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs
United Nations

According to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, some 40 per cent of the people in developing countries which are members of the Bank live in "absolute poverty," that is, in a condition of life so degraded by disease, malnutrition, squalor and illiteracy that it denies to its victims, even the most basic human necessities. In those countries one-third to one-half of the two billion human beings suffer from hunger or malnutrition. Some 20 to 25 per cent of the children die before the age of five. Average life expectancy is 20 years shorter than in the developed world.

A unified and effective approach to economic development means that these social factors must be considered as well as the traditional economic indicators of gross national product and national per capita income. A critical social factor in national development is the status of women.

It has been established beyond doubt that in many of the developing countries women as a group are the most underdeveloped, underutilized and undervalued of all human resources. A few facts highlight the low status of women worldwide:

- A lower percentage of women than men participate gainfully in economic life in most countries and a very much lower percentage in the developing countries;
- In most countries, women are inferior to men in the civil law, especially in the matrimonial and inheritance laws, in guardianship and legal capacity;
- In no country in the world do women participate in the activities of the governing or policymaking bodies on the local, national or regional level to an equal degree with men, and in most countries their participation is minimal.

Women's Contributions Downgraded

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization, has studied the participation of women in the economic life of their countries. These studies have been hampered by the lack of statistics. When statistics do exist, the different systems used for compiling them do not always give an accurate idea of the real participation of women in their countries' economy. Statistics in many countries and especially in the developing countries do not recognize the contributions of women in agriculture or in animal husbandry, although these two fields might form the bulk of the production

of the country and women might be the principal farm workers.

New studies, for example, show that women in Africa form 60 to 80 per cent of the agricultural labour force and that over 80 per cent of women in various countries in Western Africa are engaged in trading activities. Cottage industries and craftwork occupy many women in developing areas.

Since the contributions of women are usually ignored in statistics, women are not taken into account in economic planning either. Women are not given the necessary training and assistance to increase their productivity by modern methods of farming, by loans or by the establishment of cooperatives. One of the reasons for this lack of assistance to women is the generally held opinion that men are the heads of families. According to recent findings, however, up to a third of all the families in some countries are headed by women in both rural and urban areas. In the rural areas this is primarily due to the migration of men to the cities for better work opportunities, whereas in the urban areas the one-parent families are often headed by single or divorced women.

Women's Status and Family Planning Linked

Another study, requested by the Economic and Social Council, reviewed the relationship between the status of women and family planning. It should be of interest and importance not only to women but also to entire societies. Based upon information from over fifty Governments, on in-depth studies in various research institutes, and on findings of inter-regional and regional seminars, a report was submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women in January 1974. This study clearly reveals the relationship between the status of women and their ability to exercise their right for decision making as to the number and spacing of their children. The study shows that the knowledge and will as well as the ability to make family planning decisions depends on a number of factors, including health, information and education, employment, status in civil law, economic independence, and political and other participation in the life of the society.

The impact of education and gainful employment on fertility was significant. The study showed that the couple's fertility was more strongly correlated with the educational level of the wife than that of the husband. This would suggest that investment in female education has a greater impact on fertility than the same investment in education for men. In most developing countries, the education of women appears to have a very strong impact on their fertility, but where higher education is confined to a small elite, its impact on overall birth rates is slight. Unlike industrialized countries, however, where a significant reduction in family size may not appear until much higher levels of education are reached, even the transition from illiteracy to literacy has some influence on family size in many developing areas. In all countries, women with higher education marry considerably later, are less likely to marry at all, desire smaller families and are far more likely to know about and practice "modern" effective contraception than are less educated or illiterate women. Yet, today most women of reproductive age in developing countries and especially in rural areas, are illiterate and without effective options to choose education, employment or reduced fertility.

Employment for Women

Even a high level of education may not contribute to a lower desired or actual family size, however, if a women does not find adequate outlet for her skills in a career or other rewarding nonfamilial activities. In other words, female employment alone may not influence fertility significantly unless a woman's education has prepared her for something more than subsistence

Women can be productive in the industrial sector.

agricultural labour, unpaid work in a family enterprise, or other low-status, low-paying jobs.

The interrelationship between the employment of women and family planning varies from country to country, but certain common factors emerge. **The relationship between female employment and fertility seems most clear in the industrialized countries. Women who are employed full time in developed countries tend to have smaller families (or to remain childless) more often than those who are employed part time or not at all.** Women who have worked for a major part of their married lives have smaller families than those who work only sporadically. Women in professional occupations, which require higher education and provide greater social and economic rewards, have smaller families than those in blue collar and service occupations. Women with a high degree of work commitment are more likely to know about and practice modern and effective methods of birth planning.

In rural areas of industrialized countries, however, where agricultural work is not so incompatible with raising a large family, the relationship between female employment and fertility often disappears. Also, in most developing countries the employment-fertility relationship is less clear, and particularly so in rural areas, where the value of large numbers of children remains strong and where employment is likely to be in the fields where a woman may keep her young children with her while working.

Women should receive equal pay for equal work.

Rapid Population Growth Harms Women

The study also reviewed the effect of population trends on the status of women and came to disturbing conclusions. **A rapid rate of population growth, which affects everyone's access to education and employment, may have a more detrimental effect on women than men. Especially if women are denied equal opportunities with men in these fields, they will suffer greater economic deprivation.** This may in turn produce additional population growth if women have no alternative role to that of motherhood. In fact, the high fertility rates which are the cause of concern to so many countries at present may be not so much the cause of underdevelopment as the consequence of it. To correct this situation will clearly require new measures to improve the status of women in many countries.

Millions of uneducated, illiterate women, who work 18 hours a day for a zero net income—these are the women who bear the majority of the world's children, often in circumstances which are not commensurate with the dignity of human beings. Their children, wanted or unwanted, educated or uneducated, employed or unemployed, form the majority of the world's population.

Although the need for the integration of women in the total development effort was stated in broad terms in the International Development Strategy, very little appeared at first by way of detailed objectives or targets. A group of non-governmental organizations pointed out recently that the Strategy omitted to mention even such essential policy measures as the need for equality of men and women in law and in practice and the need for separate rural and urban programs to assist women in different circumstances. Their valuable statement concluded: **"If social objectives are to be attained, economic growth secured and human resources mobilized, the strategic importance of women as persons must be recognized and opportunities provided for their active participation in all development efforts. . . . Development will be handicapped as long as women remain uneducated, without legal or economic equality, with too small a voice in family and community decisions and unequipped for employment."**

Fortunately, now at last, an increasing number of countries see the urgent need to link population factors and development with a far greater degree of participation by women.

Women will want fewer children if their place in society is improved

Family Planning Improves Opportunities for Women

by
JULIA HENDERSON
Secretary General
International Planned Parenthood Federation

It is an unfortunate paradox that while the family planning movement has had its roots in the suffragette era of the first part of this century, little attention has so far been paid to the influence which the status of women has on the prospects for extending family planning to all couples as a matter of human rights or for curtailing world population growth. Nor has any serious study been made on the limitations which the population explosion may impose on the achievement of the aspirations of women in many countries.

The report presented to the Commission on the Status of Women in January, 1974 (see pages 12 and 13) shows how difficult it is to establish and to quantify this influence; but the report's findings, and those of other recent studies, make it clear that women will want fewer children if their place in society is improved. If women are given opportunities for higher education, jobs outside the home and participation in the affairs of their community, most will find these outlets for their energy and intelligence a satisfactory substitute for excessive childbearing. Conversely, a woman faced with involuntary childbirth and burdened with unwanted numbers of children will not be able to take advantage of even the most slender improvements in the status of her sex in the society in which she lives. This interrelationship is highly complex and inexplicably intertwined with the traditional, cultural and religious attitudes toward women in the home and in the family.

Development is a process from which women must benefit equally with men and to which they must contribute. It makes nonsense of most development plans to suggest that the aims can be achieved in a climate of persistently archaic marriage customs, denial of partnership in decision-making about the family and failure to legislate for and implement equal rights in education and employment.

Commission on Status of Women Overlooked

It is a sad commentary on how far we are from any real progress in this respect that many governments found it difficult to comprehend the nature and purpose of the Commission on the Status of Women's enquiry and its relevance to nations. As the Commission's report noted, "There was also little awareness that information on these topics would provide governments with useful data for the elaboration of national policies and programmes, both in social and economic development and in population."

Since social welfare and economic development are the common objectives of population policies and national family planning programmes, governments must not be allowed to ignore the limitations to success which will be imposed on national development efforts by

the failure to improve the position of women in society. Even so, legal changes are not enough and tend, in any case, to come about in response to social pressures. The role of women is bound by tradition and cultural custom, and it is from within the family and the community that changes must be induced.

In these circumstances, the role of the voluntary organization, itself a force for social change, and with its roots in the community and in the movement for the emancipation of women, is of fundamental importance. It is our experience that such fundamental changes arise less from the deliberate actions of governments, than from the pressures created by individuals and organizations seeking to improve the quality of life. The national family planning association is such an organization, and today it works in partnership with other voluntary agencies concerned with economic and social development.

IPPF Works With Women's Organizations

Recognizing the role family planning can play in the women's movement, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), through its central and regional offices and member associations, has for years sought to develop links with women's organizations of many kinds—professional, political, religious and others with social and humanitarian goals. A dialogue has developed on areas of common interest and on the contribution that women's and family planning organizations can make to each other's programmes. The IPPF has provided occasional assistance for special projects, information on family planning and population matters, educational materials, speakers and resource personnel for conferences and seminars. It is now urgent that this work should have increasing priority and gain the support of international agencies.

With the convergence of World Population Year in 1974 and International Women's Year, in 1975, the IPPF will attempt to extend and deepen the contacts already established and to open up new channels for more communication at the grass roots level. There is already no lack of practical examples of cooperation between the women's and the family planning movements, which in many countries have long had similar goals. Most women's organizations have been quick to appreciate that the means to space pregnancies and make personal and rational decisions about family size can enable women to take advantage of a far wider range of opportunities in education and employment. Younger women with no or few children are more likely to complete their education or vocational training and to find paid employment outside the home. Family planning also helps free women to play a more active part in public affairs, to influence the decisions that affect the life of the community and to participate more fully in political, economic, professional and social activities.

Family Planning Improves Women's Opportunities

A significant finding of the enquiry conducted by the Commission on the Status of Women was the absence of women in key positions in national family planning programmes. Women have, in most countries, slim chances of obtaining senior government posts but surely family planning is one area where a breakthrough can be expected since women should have the right to make decisions affecting their own future and to contribute towards designing the kind of family planning services which will best meet their needs and those of their partners and families.

While many long-term benefits of family planning have yet to be felt by women, one of the most important and most immediately visible benefits is to the health of women and children. This has special significance for the prospects of reducing the present rapid rates of population growth. It is on the one hand the persistently high incidence of infant mortality which deters parents in many countries from limiting the numbers of their children, yet on the other hand, millions of infant and child deaths are caused primarily because pregnancies occur too close together or too frequently. This tragic situation is linked with with yet another imponderable in the complex interrelationship between population growth and the status of women—the desire for sons. There is a slogan in Korea "Daughter or son. Stop at two. Bring them up well." That is a spirit of true equality and parental love which should be encouraged in developed and developing countries alike.

We must accord women their rightful place as equals to men in society. Surely this goal will be fundamental to the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations Second Development Decade and of the World Population Plan of Action.

Changing Roles of Women in Africa

by
A. R. JIAGGE
Justice, Court of Appeal
Accra, Ghana

The traditional roles of women as mothers, homemakers and preschool teachers of children continue to be of prime importance in Africa. However, the traditional family and fertility pattern, aimed at producing as many children as possible, is undergoing rapid change.

In the recent past, a large family was not only a status symbol, but also a safeguard against extinction by famine, epidemics and war. The raising of a man's successor was so important to him that he aspired to have a great number of children. If some died in infancy, others might live to adulthood and support their family in old age. A man's labour force was composed mainly of his wives and children. The more children he had the greater the number of hands available for work on his farms or for fishing.

The main preoccupation of women, therefore, was childbearing. The wife who could produce as many as 10 or 12 children was highly honoured and the worth of a man was calculated in terms of the number of children he could father.

Traditional Attitudes Changing

The traditional attitude toward large families is now breaking down in many parts of Africa under the strain of changing living conditions. First, the advent of independence brought with it many new roles for women and many new commitments. Women fought side by side with men for independence. **At a United Nations Seminar held in March, 1969 at Addis Ababa, women from all over Africa declared that the commitment of African women to individual and national progress did not depend on age or level of education. Women were committed to a more active national life from the moment they realized that, if the problems arising in their country were to be solved, they themselves must take an active part in solving them.**

Second, although health and medical facilities are in no way adequate in Africa, in the last decade the high mortality, especially of young children, has been reduced. The likelihood that all the children in a family will live to adulthood is greater today than ever before. Furthermore, the high cost of living plus the fact that children must attend school combine to make having many children less productive for and more expensive to the parent. These and many other factors have contributed to the diminishing size of the family. This change has had serious repercussions on the lives of women who were brought up in some parts of the continent solely to play the role of mother, housekeeper or preschool teacher of children.

Women must know more and do more not only for their own families' sake but also for the whole community. With the help of radio, mobile cinema vans and mass media in general, information on the hazards of unhygienic conditions of life is being disseminated in

urban and rural areas. Public health nurses visit homes to examine the children and explain to parents the benefits of a balanced diet and the effect of malnutrition on children. Women in many parts of the continent realize that they must work with men to solve such problems. In Ghana, women in rural areas have been in the forefront of self-help development projects and many modern amenities have been provided in the villages through communal labour.

De Facto Discrimination Must Stop

Certainly as women leaders at the United Nations Seminar declared, civic and political maturity could be achieved sooner by providing better educational opportunities for women and by encouraging women to work more closely with men. Many African countries are giving high priority to education in their national development plans and women in many of these countries have access to education at all levels. Nevertheless, the progress achieved in higher education for women is disappointing. For instance, in Ghana the percentage of girls in primary schools is almost the same as that of boys, but higher up the educational ladder this percentage drops drastically. Although women in Ghana have for several decades enjoyed legal access to education at all levels, women still form only ten per cent of our total university student population.

The traditional attitude that girls should get married soon after puberty continues to influence many girls in the middle and secondary schools. Another factor responsible for the drop-out of adolescent girls from school is finances. Even when parents can afford the expense, they prefer to spend money on their sons who are expected to support them later in life. Young women of ability are awarded scholarships to various institutions of higher learning, but only a comparatively small number stay in school long enough to qualify for university education which is virtually free.

The problem of drop-outs among adolescent girls in the middle and secondary schools is part of a bigger national concern. Deep-rooted traditional practices, customs and attitudes discriminate against women. From birth, women learn that they are less capable and less valuable than men. Consequently, many girls grow up with limited expectations and few aspirations.

Most women are unable to break loose from these shackles. They form the majority of the illiterates in

Traditional women's work does not interfere with childbearing, but often undervalues women's skills.

Africa, and in fact, the entire world. Yet Africa can ill afford to neglect the talent and energy women can bring to all spheres of life. The provision of adequate educational and job training opportunities will not be enough. There is an urgent need for a deliberate effort to eradicate from our societies all customary laws, practices and attitudes which discriminate against women. There is a need for long-term national programmes in each African country for the advancement of women.

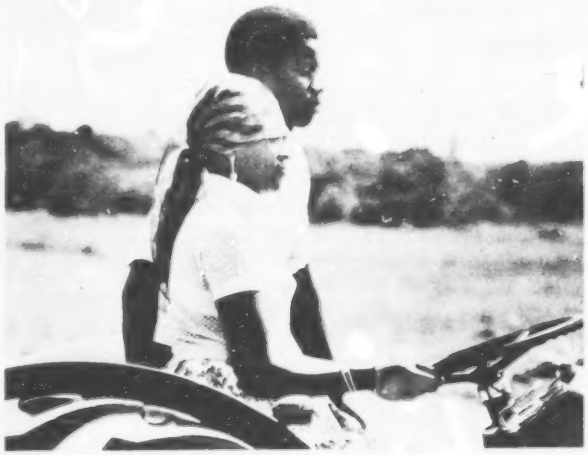
Women Active Economically

In spite of the adverse traditional attitudes, the roles of women continue to change in Africa, in some areas more rapidly than in others. Women, in addition to being mothers, are also breadwinners in many parts of Africa and make significant contributions to the economic lives of their countries. In Ghana, for instance, there is a growing number of business women and entrepreneurs who, whether married or not, obtain large bank loans on their own to finance their businesses or enterprises. These women acquire property and dispose of it as they wish; many employ labourers.

The number of women entrepreneurs and manufacturers in Ghana is small but is growing rapidly. About two years ago, the chairperson of the manufacturers' association was a woman. Women in Ghana, whether married or not, exercise the same civic and political rights as men. Both are taxed on an equal basis. Married women are taxed separately on their incomes and there are no allowances given for children.

The need for day-care services for working mothers in Ghana was spotlighted some years ago by a voluntary association. Today, in addition to private nurseries, the municipal authorities run day-care centres near the big markets for the children of market women. The government of Ghana, in cooperation with UNICEF, runs a center for the training of nursery school attendants and teachers for the day-care centres for children under age five.

Under the law, married and unmarried women in Ghana enjoy equal rights with men in employment and conditions of work with respect to equal pay for work of equal value, minimum wage, number of working hours, paid holidays and social security benefits. In addition, women in the public services are entitled



to paid maternity leave for three pregnancies.

Too Few Women Leaders

Women have equal political rights with men. They are voters and can hold office. Some women serve in the government as senior officers of state and one is a cabinet minister. The number of women in parliament, however, is small. This again is due to the traditional prejudice against women. This prejudice is so pervasive that many women will not even vote for female candidates.

Some women serve as judges on the inferior and superior courts of law in Ghana. As lawyers, women plead cases before all the courts of the land. In the health professions, women comprise more than 90

per cent of all the nurses in the country, but the number of women doctors is small.

The actual number of women who participate fully in the economic, political and social life of Ghana is still very small, however, compared with the number of poor, illiterate women. This sad phenomenon is unfortunately true in many other parts of Africa as well. No government in Africa can be realistic in its national economic plans without taking into account the large reservoir of illiterate women who can provide only unskilled labour. The challenge African governments face is to bring women into the productive sector of the economy for the good of the whole country.

Priority for Advancement of Women

Finally, there is a growing realization that every human being has a right and duty to develop and utilize her talents, capabilities and skills to the best of her ability, not merely for the sake of financial remuneration but also for fulfillment. **The eradication of the traditional attitudes limiting the roles of women in society should therefore be a major issue of national concern and action. It is true that some women have broken loose from these shackles themselves, but the great number require help to free themselves from traditional pressures which inhibit women and prevent them from improving their economic and social positions. In order to free these women to play more useful roles in society, all African states must give priority to the development and implementation of a long-term programme for the advancement of women.**

Rapid Population Growth Threatens Advancement of Women

Excerpts from the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Regional Seminar on the Status of Women and Family Planning Held in Jogjakarta, Indonesia on June 20-30, 1973.

The seminar considers:

(a) that there is a vital link between national development and the status of women;

(b) that the current and future trends of population size, growth, composition and distribution in the region have very serious implications both for economic and social development and for the status of women. Despite the efforts made to increase both the quality and the quantity of educational facilities, employment opportunities, food production, drinking water and housing, the rapid growth of population is making this task difficult, and seriously threatening the prospects for the advancement of women at the present time;

(c) that the status of women is a significant factor influencing family size, and that family planning offers an important means of raising the status of women, and of enabling them to participate actively in the creation of the conditions necessary to enable both women and men to enjoy the rights to which they are entitled as human beings;

(d) that women have a crucial role to play in the solution of the problems arising from the current and future population trends in the ECAFE region, and that as long as women, constituting half the population, are denied equal opportunities, especially in the fields of education and employment, high fertility rates may be anticipated.

The seminar recommends that governments and other appropriate agencies recognize and incorporate the vital relationship between the status of women, population factors and overall development in the formulation and implementation of their national development plans, population policies, United Nations Development Programme country programmes and technical assistance projects. The international organizations should also accord full recognition to this important relationship in extending technical assistance to Governments.

STATUS OF WOMEN AND FAMILY PLANNING

A Report of the Special Rapporteur

United Nations Economic and Social Council
Commission on the Status of Women

The report was prepared by Helvi Sipila of Finland then Special Rapporteur to the Commission on the Status of Women and now Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations. The report was submitted November 27, 1973. Excerpts from the conclusions are printed below. Copies of the complete report are available upon request from the Victor-Bostrom Fund Committee, 1835 K Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20006

Few of the recommendations for action made in this report are in themselves new. Many of them have been made previously in resolutions adopted by, or on the initiative of, the Commission on the Status of Women in its endeavours to achieve equality of rights and opportunities of women and men in the political, civil, economic, educational and social fields.

What is new and highly significant, however, is the context in which these recommendations are made, and in which they must be understood and acted upon. The study itself, and the seminar discussions that have been an important part of the findings reached, establish clearly that their is a vital link between the condition of women, population questions and overall development, and that women have a crucial role to play in these areas, which must be fully and universally recognized if effective solutions to current problems are to be found.

The message of this study can be said to be threefold:

(a) Family planning (i.e., the right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of one's children, and the right to adequate information, education and services in this respect) offers obvious benefits to women as individuals, especially as regards their health, education or employment and their roles in family and public life. Many women are, however, unaware of these benefits. When they realize that childbearing can be a matter of choice and is not inevitable, they will feel free to seek and carry out alternative roles. Nevertheless, while it can be a force for change, family planning is no substitute for the radical reforms that are also called for. The alternative roles must be available for women to assume, and women must be made aware that there are alternative roles for them;

(b) The status of women and, more especially, their educational level, the extent to which they are employed and the nature of their employment or occupation, their position in the family and their participation in community and national life have a marked, and even decisive, influence both on family size and on the success of family planning programmes. Constant childbearing, in which the woman has little say or freedom of choice, leads to high fertility patterns that, in themselves, are not desired by the majority of countries where they are prevalent. . . . More often than not high fertility is not a matter of free choice of the individual. It usually goes hand in hand with low status of women, lack of educational and employment opportunities for them, and conditions of poverty, overwork and drudgery. It prevails especially in many of the world's rural areas and urban slums. It is both the *result* and the *cause* of underdevelopment, setting in motion a vicious circle, especially where resources are limited;

(c) Current and future population growth, structure and distribution have very serious implications both for development and for the advancement of women in a great number of countries. Despite the efforts made to improve conditions, the rapid rate of population growth makes the task extremely difficult, and places a severe strain on the already limited resources available. Nevertheless, unless measures are taken *as a matter of urgency*, to improve the condition of women, continued high fertility patterns may be expected and the vicious circle will continue. Family planning, while it should be regarded as an essential part of development plans and programmes, will not alone solve the problem. Moreover, family planning programmes themselves cannot fully succeed without improvements in the condition of women.

Against this background the measures proposed . . . assume a new significance. The promotion of equal opportunities for women and men is an objective in and of itself, to which the United Nations is already committed. . . . This objective has not hitherto been seen, however, as a significant factor in the context of either development or population.

The contribution of this study lies therefore in focusing on the best guarantees for a successful population policy which recognizes the need to promote equal rights and opportunities for women. Only then can the vicious circle of low status and lack of opportunities for women, and high fertility be weakened. The need to recognize the right to family planning as a basic human right and securing it not only by adequate education and information in this respect but also by promoting the social, economic and political conditions which would ensure equal opportunities for all thus assumes an absolute urgency for all policy-makers, including especially the development planners, demographers and economists.

Women Must Be Involved
In Decision-Making . . .

Family Planning and the Status of Women

by
NAFIS SADIK, M.D., M.P.H.
Acting Chief, Programme Division
United Nations Fund for Population Activities

If we could judge by voting in the United Nations General Assembly, women today would have very little to worry about, at least as regards their rights and status. Apart from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, conventions have been adopted on the political rights of women, on the nationality of married women and on the legality of marriage agreements. A Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly on 7 November 1967. A Commission on the Status of Women meets every other year and draws up recommendations to improve the position of women in law and in practice.

The various conclusions, declarations, recommendations and conventions are accepted by the great majority of member states of the United Nations and have had their effect on national legislation and on public opinion. **Nevertheless, for many women lack of social, educational and economic opportunity remains a chronic condition of their lives. The right to equal pay may be enshrined in the law but the opportunity to work is not guaranteed; the right to go to school is protected but not the ability to stay there without family support; equal status in marriage is declared, but the husband is still regarded in fact if not in law as head of the household.**

Status of Women in Developing Areas

In developing countries these practical aspects of the status of women can be seen in their most complex forms. For example, African life has in the last hundred years suffered the incursion of colonialism, the strains of independence, and the rapid growth of modern industrial centers in the middle of essentially traditional rural existence. Village life has been opened as never before to outside influences. Traditional restrictions on freedom of action have gone but with them have gone some of the protections enjoyed by members of traditional society.

It is clear that the peculiar self-reliance of the African woman, and her rights in property and personal law, were not adequately understood—or understood at all—by nineteenth-century Europeans used to the subservience of women at home. This has resulted in anomalies in the modern law and hardships for women deprived of their former rights. In practical terms it has meant, for instance, that women were not included in agricultural extension schemes because it was not understood that their part in farming was at least as important as that of men. Their access to education generally has been limited. In Asia, the operation of caste systems has prevented some women from leaving their recognized sphere of domestic activity to take paid employment. Where there is no traditional bar to manual labour by women, as in South India, wage differentials between men and women are marked.

These complexities and contradictions are nowhere more clearly seen than in family planning. The International Conference on Human Rights in 1968 proclaimed the basic right of couples to determine freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their chil-

dren. But, as a Western Hemisphere regional seminar on the status of women and family planning held in Santo Domingo in June 1973 pointed out, this right "is closely related to the extent to which they (women) are integrated into the social, economic, cultural and political life of the societies in which they live ... achievement of equality of men and women and the fulfillment of the aspirations of the people, though influenced by demographic conditions, depends primarily on the realization of basic economic, social, political and cultural reforms required by the conditions existing in each country." This seminar and others in Jogjakarta, Indonesia and Istanbul, Turkey emphasized that family planning was not the same as birth control, but includes, as the Santo Domingo Seminar put it, "a wide array of measures and programmes aimed at expanding the range of human rights and freedoms and contributing to social and economic development."

Women Need Education and Jobs

The relationships between fertility and education, fertility and employment outside the home, fertility and domestic status, may be even more intricate than is commonly supposed. For example, there is a tendency to connect a higher level of education with smaller families. Although several studies have found that educated women have fewer children, there is also a close association between education and other factors such as urbanization, age at marriage and employment. One study concludes that a certain amount of urbanization may be necessary to "activate the effort of education on fertility."

Similarly with employment, it is often assumed that paid employment creates an incompatibility between family and job, so that the number of children is smaller. Yet village women who work on farms have just as many children as those who do not work. In the towns, a researcher concluded that the average family size of the working woman in New Delhi corresponded exactly with that of the unemployed women in the same area. So the connection between employment and fertility is not at all clear, although once more when other variables—education or higher socio-economic status—intervene, the picture is clearer.

The literature from which these examples are taken illustrates these complexities very well in discussing the importance of the marriage relationship. Effective use of contraceptives is greatest among couples when the wife has influence in family decisions. And equality in decision-making is positively related to both the wife's education and her participation in the labour force.

Women Must Be Decision Makers

One positive step which is necessary is to involve women in the process of discussion and decision-making on the means and the methods of family planning programmes. That this even has to be said illustrates the anomalous situation in which decisions affecting the

In Asia millions of women still work in cottage industry and agriculture.

lives of women in the most direct and personal way are made without their direct participation. Even without taking into account the demands of natural justice it would seem obvious that women themselves know best what their needs are and how they should be served.

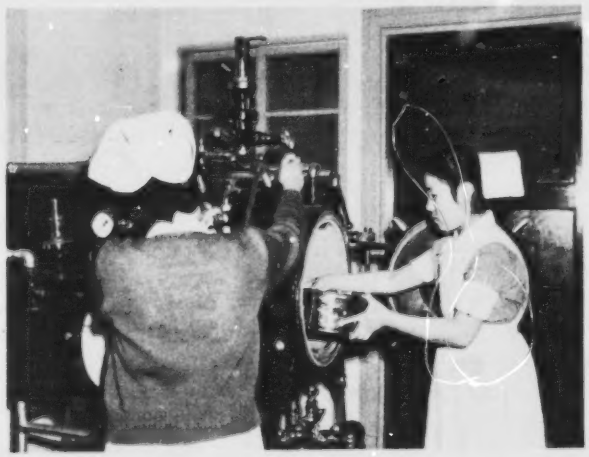
For World Population Year the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) has financed research, discussion and publication on an international scale, including three regional seminars for Asia, Africa and Latin America on family planning and the status of women. Underlining the interdependence of population and other aspects of development, a Women's International Forum on Population and Development will be held in the United States in February. Seminars on the integration of women in development, with special reference to population factors will be held in Asia and Africa in 1974 and more are planned for Latin America, the Caribbean and the Middle East. The World Population Year Secretariat is making a special effort to involve women's organizations in WPY activity.

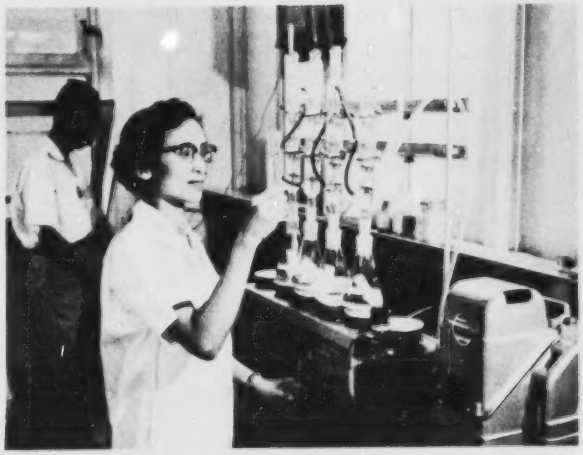
UNFPA and Women

Ongoing projects financed by UNFPA include all aspects of support for family planning, direct and indirect. Delivery of services is still a problem in many areas because buildings, transport and equipment are lacking, trained staff are still in short supply and basic knowledge of reproduction and of contraceptive techniques is needed. The larger proportion of UNFPA's resources is devoted to meeting these needs.

At the same time, we are exploring ways in which our appreciation of the complex relationship between the status of women, population and development can be utilized. One means is through integration of UNFPA-supported projects. In several countries comprehensive support is being given to all aspects of the family planning programme over a period of four years, including a variety of projects affecting education, employment, mother and child health, and contraceptive delivery. Similar comprehensive agreements have been concluded with ten other countries and new ones are expected to follow.

If there is a clear message which emerges, it is that we cannot afford to be mechanistic in our approach. The experience of developing countries is littered with failures resulting from too great a reliance on a single solution to the family planning "problem." **The acceptance of voluntary regulation of fertility and access to the means of doing so are crucial to the status of women, and at least in part are also dependent on it. Acceptance of family planning depends on a complex interaction in which literacy, employment, economic status and conjugal and social relationships as well as family planning programmes all play an important part. Certainly, it is only by appreciation of that interaction that the aims of developmentalists and the aspirations of women will be realized.**





Women's skills and energies are needed in health care and other sciences.

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Barriers against equal opportunities for women must be eliminated

Employment and Education: Keys to Smaller Families

by
ESTER BOSERUP
Author of
Woman's Role in Economic Development

There is no question that lack of access to family planning information and services is a serious deterrent to reducing fertility rates. In many developing countries access to family planning services is limited to the cities where only about one-quarter of the population lives. In the rural areas, where the bulk of the population resides, contraceptive information and methods scarcely exist. Adequate services could meet the needs of couples who wish to have only four children, perhaps, rather than six. The provision of family planning services, however, will not magically transform the centuries of large family traditions. Couples have more than two children in part because they have no access to family planning or know nothing about it. Most of the time, however, a couple may wish to have a large family. Time after time couples in both rural and urban settings state in questionnaires that they desire to have at least three children and often four or more.

Children are especially welcome in rural areas. In traditional agricultural societies children are often an economic asset rather than a burden on their parents. From a very young age children perform household and agricultural chores which far outweigh their meager daily rations of food. Even before reaching adolescence, children may contribute more to the family's supply of goods and services than they consume. Investing in a large family can pay off very soon to parents who cannot afford to hire farm laborers.

Home-Based Jobs Effect Fertility Little

Living in a city or town usually carries with it an incentive for smaller family size but the strength of this incentive is often overestimated. For women who can find full time employment in the industrial or service sector there is good reason to keep family size small. In most developing countries, however, nearly all of the women employed in urban areas do part time domestic work or are engaged in such activities as crafts, home industries or trade. In these home-based occupations it is possible to continue childbearing and earning wages. In fact, children, from an early age, can contribute to such enterprises. The economic incentive to limit family size in urban areas of developing countries is therefore often too weak to outweigh the traditionally high status enjoyed by women with many children, especially many male children. The high infant mortality rates, which were commonplace in low-income countries until recently, and the economic contribution of children combined to reinforce the prestige enjoyed by mothers of large families.

Better Education Needed Now

Two factors do influence a woman to favor a smaller family. They are education and employment. Better educated and working mothers usually have fewer children than illiterate, semi-literate or non-working mothers. Attitudes change with education. Family planning will be adopted more rapidly if girls as well as boys attend primary school. Young women must be taught that the ideal role of a girl is not to be the mother of a large and poor family, but, rather, to fill a double role as mother of a small family and as a wage-earner who contributes to the wellbeing of her family by economic employment in addition to domestic duties.

Barriers against equal employment for women must be eliminated. A family with two wage-earners and few dependents can contribute to public revenues by paying taxes and to capital formation by savings. Thus, in contrast with the large and poor one wage-earner family, the smaller two wage-earner family helps to accelerate economic development, and so increase demand for labor—male as well as female. Therefore, a low-income country will gain by opening job opportunities for women. **It is a dangerous fallacy to believe that there are only a certain number of jobs available and that filling them with women is tantamount to increasing the number of unemployed men.**

If a woman continues to work after she has had a first or second child, she is more likely to adopt family planning in order to avoid having any more children than a woman who never worked, or who quit work after the birth of her first child. Consequently, there are two ways to promote a more rapid decline in the birth rate. The first course is to educate and train girls to undertake some income-producing activity even before they marry and have children—presuming access to suitable jobs. The second course is to make it easier for women with one or two children to combine gainful, economic opportunity with care of the children or other household duties. There are many inexpensive ways of doing this including, for example, day care centers for children which rely upon voluntary services by the mothers.

Rural Needs Are Especially Urgent

In rural areas, special efforts will have to be undertaken to reduce traditional incentives for high fertility. Women are often overburdened by agricultural work in the fields and by domestic work in primitive conditions. It is no wonder that their daughters are often kept from school in order to help at home! This creates a vicious circle, since the younger generation grows up with traditional attitudes towards female roles and young girls desire many children to help them when they assume responsibility for both home and farm.

This vicious cycle may be broken if school attendance is made compulsory for girls and if mothers are relieved of some of their burden of work by learning modern agricultural methods and by acquiring improved equipment, both agricultural and domestic.

Millions of women perform agricultural work as well as domestic chores. The introduction of modern farm implements will, hopefully, ease this double burden.

Formal Education of Women
is Crucial to Fertility Declines

Education of Women: Essential to the National Progress

by
GWENDOLYN JOHNSON ACSÁDI
Population Division
United Nations

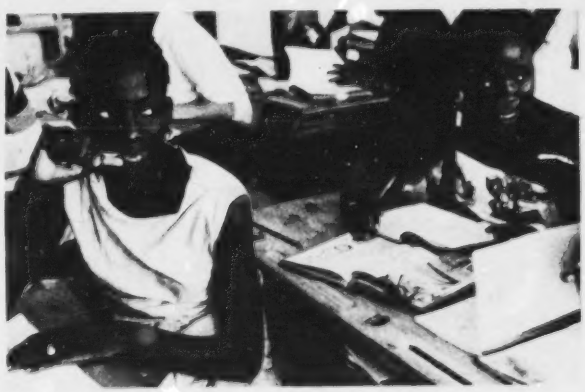
There are compelling reasons today to give women equal opportunities with men to realize their potential as individuals and to participate actively and productively in the economic and social lives of their countries. Even if humanitarian considerations were disregarded, the denial to women of equal rights and opportunities has unfortunate consequences not only for the women as individuals, but also for society. Certainly, failure to utilize female skills and labour more advantageously as a development resource represents a wasteful extravagance that the developing nations particularly cannot afford.

In the economically less advanced countries, especially, a vicious circle of adverse and interrelated conditions makes it difficult to determine what is cause and what is effect. On the one hand, females are considered unqualified for many jobs because they lack sufficient education. On the other hand, having no satisfactory career alternatives, women marry early and build a large family. Then the annual cohorts of school age children are so numerous that all cannot be educated, and preference is given to the education of boys. Besides, the girls are needed at home to help their overworked mothers. These girls who are not educated then have little choice but to marry early and build a large family of their own. So the cycle continues.

Literacy is an obvious criterion to judge the present status of women and their contribution to economic and social development. Available statistics show, not surprisingly, that in the developing regions there are significantly more female than male illiterates. **In most developing countries the great majority of illiterate women who are economically active perform tasks that do not interfere appreciably with their childbearing activities. Consequently, female illiteracy reinforces high fertility and the other conditions that impede development and crystallize the women's life pattern of inequality and missed opportunity.**

Education is a Catalyst to Progress

It can hardly be contested that the formal education of females as well as males, at least through primary school, is crucial to all aspects of economic and social development, including the modernization of human reproductive behaviour. There is evidence, for example, that in most regions women who are better educated



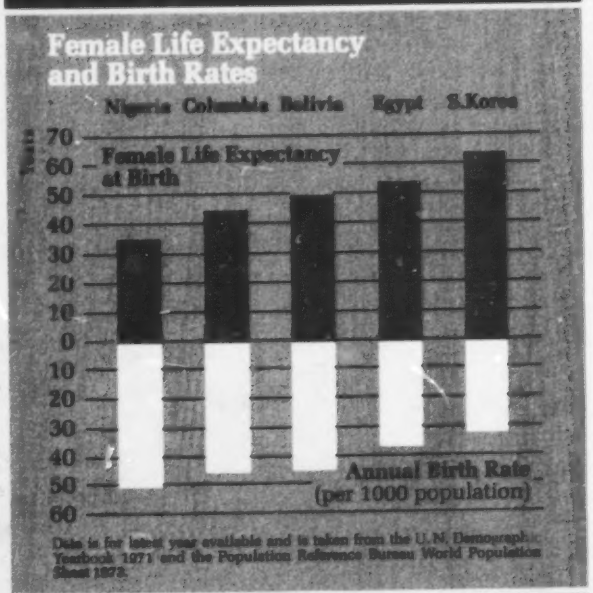
have lower fertility. In most developing countries the evidence indicates that even a relatively low level of education can help to liberate women from the burden of excessive fertility. Increased educational opportunities would, along with other modernizing forces, stimulate national fertility declines while, at the same time, enabling greater numbers of women to accept gainful employment and thus to contribute directly to development. Also, women who are employed outside the home and especially in professional circumstances or organizations have lower fertility. This is not to suggest that education of women can in itself cause birth rates to drop, but rather that education is a catalyst for progress in general and that, where it is an accepted way of life for all people, rational behaviour with respect to reproduction and fertility is also more likely to prevail.

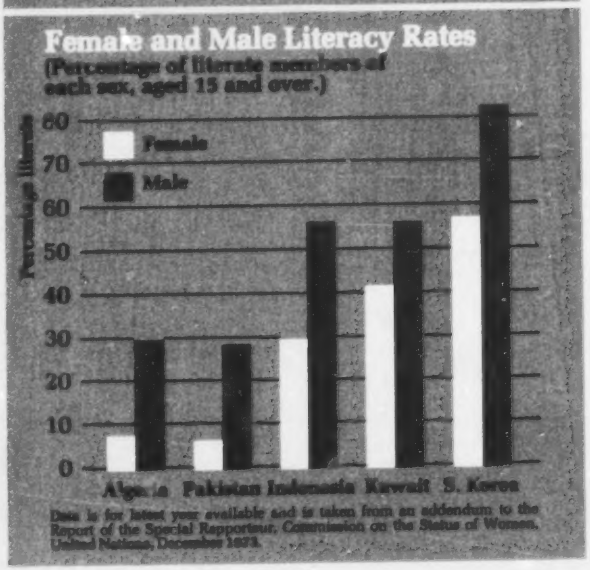
Certainly the disparities in access to education reinforce other conditions of inequality. The existing imperfect statistics on primary school attendance by sex suggest that in many developing countries, especially in Africa, girls are greatly disadvantaged with regard to equal access to education.

Usually, the ratio of females to males declines markedly with succeeding levels of school attendance. Thus, at university and higher levels, the proportion of females among students is much smaller than at the primary level. A review of available statistics and relevant literature shows that even in the economically most advanced nations, where it is accepted that all individuals should have basic education, the prevailing patterns is that university education and professional training are far more exceptional in the case of women than of men. Certainly, in the developing countries where an inverse relationship between fertility and educational status still prevails, the education of large numbers of women beyond primary school could have the dual effect of reducing fertility and improving the skills of the labour force in technical and professional area.

There are many other political, economic and legal areas in which society can derive significant benefit by extending equal opportunity to women. None is so important, however, for women and for human society than the education which is necessary so that women can play their full and appropriate roles as responsible parents, productive workers and enlightened citizens.

FEMALE LIFE EXPECTANCY AND EDUCATIONAL LEVELS
(Selected Countries)





Women can make great contributions to national development programs

Good Jobs Will Mean Smaller Families

by
MARGARITA ERRÁZURIZ
Sociologist
Latin America Demographic Center

Not just jobs but good jobs for women can have an impact upon family size. Unfortunately, in Latin America today there are too few jobs for women that are good enough to be an incentive for having fewer children. In fact, nearly the opposite is true—high fertility is almost inescapable because of the very few useful or rewarding roles open to women other than motherhood. To understand the linkages between fertility and employment it is necessary to review both the availability of family planning information and services and the type of jobs open to women.

One point should be clarified at the outset. Latin America is a very diverse area. There are over 300 million people in more than 25 countries with varying income levels who speak Spanish, Portuguese or an Indian language. This discussion is not meant to describe any one particular country, but rather is a model which explains general trends within many Latin American countries.

Many Governments Support Family Planning

Family planning programs are new in Latin America. Most were initiated in the last decade and almost without exception by private organizations. Governments hesitated to support family planning. Alarmed by the large number of illegal abortions often with serious health consequences to the woman, Chile became the first Latin American government to give official support to family planning in 1966. Other countries followed Chile's lead. Today Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Trinidad and Tobago support family planning. Some of these countries encourage the adoption of family planning in order to curb national population growth but most incorporate family planning into the national health service as a valuable part of maternal and child health care.

Limited Access to Services

Virtually all of the governments of the region recognize the basic human right of couples to plan and space their families, yet few governments have as yet undertaken major national programs to make family planning services available to all couples. **Only a small number of fertile Latin American women have access to family planning—about ten per cent. Family planning clinics are few and generally located only in urban areas. Clearly, limited access is a serious detriment to the utilization of family planning.**

There are other considerations, however, which also affect family size decisions including:

- —social and economic expectations of the family;
- —a rural or urban family location;
- —health and age of the parents;
- —levels of education attained by the parents; and
- —job opportunities for the wife.

Employment for women in Latin America, although varying from country to country, is usually characterized by several major limitations. First, most working women are involved in retail or domestic labor in the service sector of the economy. The number of

women engaged in agricultural labor is declining while even fewer women are employed in industry. Second, women who do work are usually engaged in marginally productive, hand labor activities, for example, crafts, baking, domestic labor or streetcorner retailing of magazines, lottery tickets, trinkets, etc. Third, very few women hold professional positions except as teachers and nurses which have traditionally been female roles. Few women hold civil service positions and those who do generally hold low-level secretarial or librarian positions. Moreover, the types of jobs open to women usually have highly flexible schedules. Provision for childcare at home by a friend or relative or even for the children to assist their mother at work can be readily arranged.

If female employment is to contribute to national development and to reduced fertility rates, then two important points must be remembered. It has been the Latin American experience that when women have full-time productive jobs that they generally limit their fertility. This is especially true in the urban areas. **Government employment policies which limit roles for women while trying to fill positions with the backlog of unemployed men will be counterproductive to the national development effort. Employing women must not be seen as the alternative to employing men.**

Liberating Men and Women

Family planning is a liberating experience for both men and women. It entails, however, much more than decisions regarding the number and spacing of one's children. Family planning is based on the right of couples to make decisions in all aspects of their lives. Those men and women who feel that they are in control of their own careers are most likely to practice birth planning. It is in this way that education and employment are inextricably linked to family size decisions.

For too long women have been disenfranchised from national development plans. Helping women to help themselves, their families, and their countries is a powerful way to promote national economic growth and at the same time reduce fertility rates. The challenge today is to incorporate the talents and energies of women in all aspects of economic and social life. Men, women and nations would all benefit in this generation and in future ones as well.

Government Action Required Now

Excerpts from the Conclusion and Recommendations of the Regional Seminar on the Status of Women and Family Planning convened in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, May 9-22, 1973.

The seminar recommends:

(a) That determined efforts be made to include qualified women in senior positions in all agencies of government directly or indirectly connected with family planning, especially in ministries of health, social welfare, and education;

(b) That social workers and social scientists be included in family planning programmes at the same level of participation as other professional personnel, since family planning ought to be an interdisciplinary programme;

(c) That all mass media be utilized in family planning programmes;

(d) That programmes of education for family and sexual life should stress the concept of responsible parenthood, thus promoting the idea of the unity and stability of the family as an important factor in the social and personal advancement of women and men;

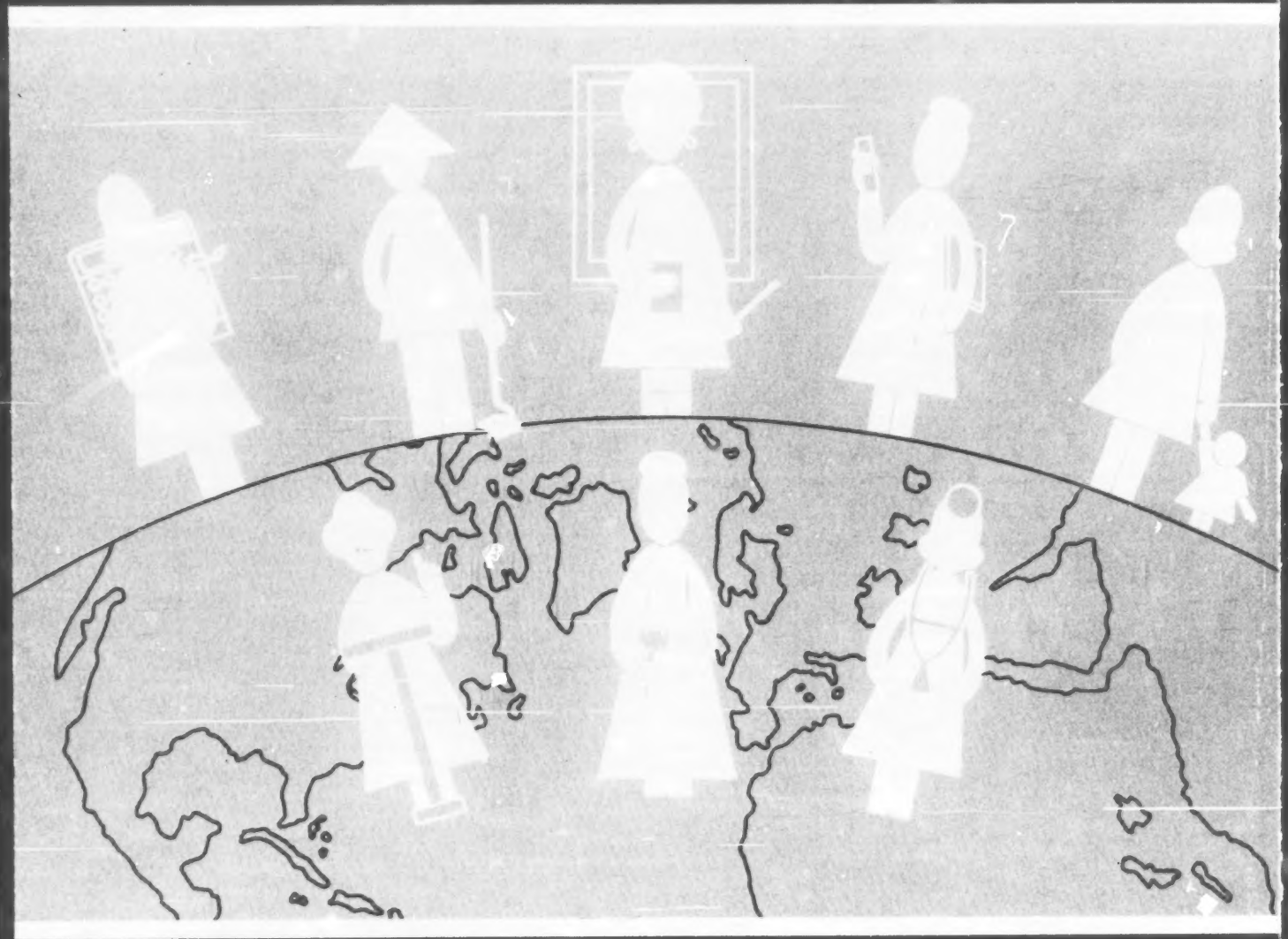
(e) That present programmes of sex education in the various countries should cover aspects of family planning, but should not be used as a springboard for family planning;

(f) That programmes designed to raise the status of women and family planning programmes be integrated in national and international development programmes.

The seminar considers that family planning is an important means of promoting the advancement of women, and of enabling them to participate actively in the creation of the social, economic and political conditions necessary for women to exercise fully all the rights to which they are entitled as human beings.

The seminar proposes that the United Nations, national governments and non-governmental organizations coordinate a programme of action for the advancement of women based on a principle of equality better suited to recognizing women as full human beings, and that such programmes be addressed to promoting equal rights for both sexes in the family, in education, in employment and in public life. A massive effort should be undertaken by the United Nations, national governments and non-governmental organizations to eliminate prejudices and practices based on the idea of the inferiority of women, in accordance with principles set forth in the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

FAMILY PLANNING: IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN



THE VICTOR-BOSTROM FUND REPORT FOR THE INTERNATIONAL PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION